

THE  
AMERICAN  
JOURNAL OF HOMOEOPATHY,  
EDITED  
BY AN ASSOCIATION  
OF  
HOMOEOPATHIC PHYSICIANS.

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**Vol. I. — No. 5. — May, 1839.**

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*View of the medical science, traced from the time of antiquity until the present age.*

CHAP. I.

OPINIONS OF EMINENT PHYSICIANS OF THE ANCIENT AND MODERN TIMES. ON THE FALLACIES AND DANGER OF HYPOTHETICAL AND THEORETICAL REASONING IN THE ART OF MEDICINE.

THE unwearied labours of Anatomists, from the ancient times, down to the present, have successfully thrown light on the human organisation.

We will not assert that Anatomy may not still make much progress in minute detail, yet the great discoveries made in the modern times, especially on the nervous system, by Le Gallois Wilson, Philip, Magendie, Brachet, Tiedemann, and Treviranus, having given it an exalted rank among other sciences, we may boldly assert that very little is left to the labours of a future generation.

*Physiology* or the study of the functions of the human body in a state of health, is indeed much less advanced.

We owe in a great measure to the two last centuries an entirely new branch of the medical science, one which has already advanced far towards perfection, and to which the name of pathological anatomy has been given.

Such are the anthropological sciences which may be deemed the basis of medicine.

*Pathology*, or the knowledge of diseases, has not kept even pace with the other anthropological sciences.

*Pathological anatomy* has certainly contributed much to a more profound knowledge of many organic affections, especially what regards the diseases of the heart and lungs.

But viewed *pathology* in general, there is much unprofitable controversy upon many subjects, and many discrepancies in

opinion concerning the nature of diseases, and the variety and opposite treatment in curing, result from the obscurity in which this branch of medical science is wrapt up.

*Materia medica.* This division of the medical art, is the least matured of any. What has hitherto been considered is only their physical and chemical properties, their emetic, drastic or sudorific qualities.

The dynamic powers of the remedies, has been the least investigated.

Our present knowledge of drugs is mostly the result of customary use or empirical trial in disease. As, however, it would be impossible to try every remedy against each disease, it is equally impossible thereby to determine their specific action.

Therapeutics is one of the most important branches of medical science, for it is by its means that the physician attains his object, which is to cure.

Although, however, he studies all the other branches of medicine, with the view of arriving at this point, yet none is more fallacious than this branch of medicine.

To establish this fact, it is only necessary to observe the conduct of physicians in the sick chamber.

He would naturally be ashamed to appear ignorant, and he may not be ignorant of the evil, which he is called to arrest, he may describe and analyze it with the utmost accuracy, he may particularize not only the diseased organ, but the part of the organ which is affected.

For example if the chest is the seat of the disease, he may indicate which lobe of the lungs, is affected, and the derangements which has taken place in its functions, and in case of dropsy in the chest, he can point out, on which side, the water is accumulated. In a case of *paralysis* or *apoplexy*, he may exactly explain how the brain is affected, and in what part the extravasation of blood has taken place, in short he may accurately classify all other maladies which may be presented to him. But when it is necessary to decide on the remedies proper to subdue these maladies, then it is that a conscientious practitioner feels all the difficulty of his art, and deficiency of the means at his command.

It is then that he hesitates to decide which of the different remedies recommended by medical authorities is most applicable,

because he has no law of certain and universal application to guide his decision.

The greater the number of physicians consulted, the greater is this uncertainty, for if they should agree on the name of the disorder, they find themselves fearfully at variance on the question of a remedy fitted to oppose it.

It must be admitted then by every enlightened and conscientious member of the profession that the therapeutic branch is in our time very far behind all the other departments of the medical art.

Every practitioner, *says Rau*, chooses his remedies differently, according to the theory or the system, which he follows, it is all chance and conjecture.

Many practitioners, especially those who excel in their profession, combine the different systems together, they possess the ability, or tact, to adopt such a method, by analogy comparison, which serves them, as a guide to lead them through the rough paths of conjecture. However, those chosen, select ones are but few.

A medical system ought to be established upon sound and certain principles, it should free us from the danger to venture upon the path of conjecture, and try our fortune with the *checkered mosaik* of Eclecticism.

As a striking proof of the fallacy of the established doctrine, is the difficulty to apply the medical theories in practice, especially in complicated cases, what physician can deny the truth of this assertion.\*

Let us hear the opinion of a few eminent man, ~~on~~ on the state of medical practice.

\* Bei dem Conflicte so vieler herrschender Meinungen und Ansichten, bei der gleichzeitigen Gangbarkeit so verschiedener Systeme und Methoden, waren in der That glückliche Kuren bisher weniger von der doctrinären Consequenz abhangig, als vom Talente des einzelnen Arztes, dessen sogenannter praktischer Blick es ihm vielleicht möglich machte, sich als Eclectiker Ruhm zu erwerben, dazu sind aber nur wenige berufen. Das System sollte uns eigentlich der Gefahr überheben, mit dem bunten Mosaik des Eclecticismus unser Heil zu versuchen. Es sollte der Faden seyn, der uns durch alle Labyrinth nosologischer Spitzfindigkeiten und Widersprüche hindurch führt. Es giebt aber wohl keinen schlagenderen Beweis für die Unvollkommenheit der Theorie, als die beschränkte Brauchbarkeit derselben in der Praxis. Dass unter solchen Verhältnissen eine Reform der Heilkunst Bedürfniss war, unterliegt keinem Zweifel. (Rau.)

If medicine, says *Abercrombie*, is ever to attain a place among the inductive sciences, its first great step towards this distinction will be made, when medical inquireres agree to restrict their investigations to ascertaining *the universality of facts*.

By adhering to this rule, we shall avoid two errors, which will probably be admitted to have been frequent in medical reasonings, and to have had no inconsiderable influence, in retarding the progress of medical science.

The one is the construction of hypothetical theories, or the assumption of principles which are altogether gratuitous, and imaginary, the other is the deduction of general principles or conclusions from a limited number of facts. Doctrines of the former class, may be considered as almost independent of observation; and those of the latter kind, though they have an apparent foundation of facts are framed without due inquiry, whether these facts are universal. The confidence is indeed remarkable with which general statements of this last description are often brought forward, and the facility with which they are received, without due examination as established principles. We even find some writers, expressing such confidence in these deductions, as to talk of general rules in medicine with exceptions to these rules: and in this manner new observations, by which the rules might be corrected, are overlooked or forgotten. Such a phraseology indeed must probably be considered as at variance with the principles of sound investigation. We are in the habit of talking of general rules in grammar, and exceptions to these rules, because we know the precise extent to which the rules apply, and the exact number of instances, which form the exceptions, but in physical science to speak of exceptions to a general rule, cannot be regarded in any other light, than as an admission that the rule is not general, and consequently is unworthy of confidence.

The best means of avoiding the errors, which have now been referred to will probably be, to keep in mind the important principle, that the object of physical science is, to ascertain the universality of facts.

A considerable number of medical doctrines, there is reason to apprehend, will come out of the examination in rather an unsatisfactory manner, if we apply to them the tests, which this rule would furnish; namely, are they *facts*, and are these *facts universal*.

To reason abstractly without practical value, seems at all times to have been the tendency of medical men.

Although we can have no hesitation in pronouncing, says *Mason Good*, that a judicious theory applied to practice is to be the correct and legitimate method of pursuing the study of medicine, yet it must be acknowledged at the same time, that it is a method, which, if not carefully watched, and strictly guarded by prudence and sagacity, is exposed to the greatest danger of being corrupted by ignorance and presumption. Hence we may easily conceive that it would be liable to fall into the grossest errors, and to lie open to the most serious imputation, and that a fair plea would always be found for exclaiming against the introduction of what is termed *theory into the practice of medicine*.

Since the first palpitation of the medical science, medical men have always wandered in idle quest, and brought back no substantial trophies from the regions of pathological speculation. If any one disputes these assertion let him keep in mind, that no system can be regarded as true, when its professors are so much at variance.

Inanis gloriae desiderium simiola fuit, quæ medicos omni aetate compulit ad sectas condendas potius, quam ad nova in dies delegenda phænomena quæ morborum historiam illustrarent.

(*Bagliv.*)

What physician is not aware of the difficulty, to make the different theories applicable to practice, the simplest malady may claim the greatest authorities for a different method of cure. Our most eminent men have been sceptical.

Boerhave calls the physician a fortunate man, if positively he does not injure his patient.

Reil in speaking of modern practice says; I have long enough been tossed on the sea of unfounded hypothesis to feel convinced that absolute darkness prevails in the medical practice, which cannot be dispelled by assertions, but only by experiments and experience.

There is among medical men, even as to the treatment of the simplest malady, a constant controversy of opinion which has no other tendency but to confuse the mind.

The ingenious Professor Hartmann from Vienna, says: On the theory of diseases, or general pathology:

Through all these gradations of development the theory of diseases and medicines is now arrived at its present position, whence from the highest point of theoretical speculation, physicians are now falling into the deepest abyss of empiric, although men are not wanting, who without regard to their private interest generously publish their observations and the result of their experience for the benefit of pathology, seeking not only to give form but also substance, and organic connection to the treatment by the bed of the sick. But taking the general run of practitioners, we can convince ourselves that the most of them, exercise nothing but the rudest empiric under the cloak of Homœopathic medicine, natural philosophy, contrastimalisme, Humoral pathology, Broussaisism, &c.

When it is further considered, says Sir Gilbert Blane, what a mass of credulity and error has actually accumulated in medicine, from the presumptuous attempt to grasp at such objects, and to make hasty and dangerous application of them to practice, when we cast our eyes upon our shelves, loaded with volumes, few of them contain any genuine profitable knowledge, the greater part of them composed chiefly, either nugatory, erroneous, inapplicable, or mischievous in which the dear bought grain is to be sought in the bushel of chaff, may it not be questioned, whether such researches have not tended more to retard and corrupt, than to advance and improve practical medicine?

#### Dr. Trinks in Dresden:

Es darf darum nicht Wunder nehmen, dass es in der Heilkunde des neunzehnten Jahrhunderts just so aussieht, wie zur Zeit des babylonischen Thurmabes. Ueberall ein gräuliches Zerwürfniss zwischen Theorie und Praxis, die sich in den stärksten Contrasten gegenüberstehen, und sich gegenseitig Lüge strafen. Hier die kühnsten Speculationen und Constructionen, dort der krasseste Materialismus und die grösste Empirie, Nachzügler von Brownianern und Erregungstheoretikern. Hie und da einzelne Humoralpathologen, ächte und modifizierte Stolljaner, Gastriker und Saborralisten, Contrastimulisten, Broussalianer, Jatrocemiker in moderner Form, Wasserdoctoren und Anhänger des famösen Cadet de Vaux, Magnetiseurs, Kieserianer und Schæleinjaner, ein buntes Gewimmel wie auf dem Göthischen Jahrmarkte zu Plun-

DERSWEILERN!—Jede Messe ein Dutzend neuer pathologischer Systeme und medizinisch-chirurgischer Encyclopädien und bei- nahe ein halbes Hundert medizinischer Journale und eine Fluth von Rezepttaschenbüchern. Eine hoffnungsvolle Zuversicht für die Millionen leidender Menschenbrüder.

The routine practice, says LUTHER, does not merit the name of a system, it wants order, coherence of parts, and scientific unity, it is an aggregate of incongruous matter, a mere rhapsody.

GIRTANNER, says our *materia medica*, is a mere collection of fallacious observations, there are in it, some correct ones founded upon experience, but who would waste time in seeking for a few particles of gold, in that immense rubbish, collected so many centuries since.

HOFFMANN's Opinion, *Per pauca sint remedia quorum virtutes et operationes certae, plurima vero infida, suspecta, fallacia, facta.*

Few are the remedies whose virtues and operations are certain, many are those which are *doubtful, suspicious, fallacious, false.*

*De tout cet amas, said MONTAIGNE, speaking of the mixture of drugs, ayant fait une mixture de breuvage, n'est ce pas quelque espece de reverie d'esperer que ces vertus s'ailent divisant et triant de cette confusion et mélange pour courir à charges si diverses? Je craindrais infiniment qu'elles perdissent ou échangent leur étiquettes et troublassent leur quartier.*

Of the whole heap, having compounded a potion, it is not an idle fancy to hope that its various virtues shall proceed to separate and extricate themselves from that mixture and confusion, in order to execute missions so diversified? I should fear excessively that they might lose or swop their billets, and excite a riot at their quarters.

In mixing together, says DR. LUTHER, so many different kind of drugs, physicians consider the stomach, a *general-post-office* where all the drugs arrive at once and are thence dispatched, each to its proper destination, one to the nerves, another to the circulation, another to the lungs, another to the brain, &c.

Medical prescriptions, says DR. BUCHAN, are written in Latin

but this practice is not only ridiculous, it is likewise dangerous. However capable physicians may be of writing Latin. I am certain apothecaries are not in condition to read it, and that dangerous mistakes in consequence of this, may often happen. But suppose the apothecary ever so capable of reading the physician's prescriptions, he is generally otherwise employed, and the business of making up prescriptions, is left entirely to the apprentice. By this means the greatest man in the kingdom even when he employs a first rate physician, in reality trusts his life into the hands of an idle boy, who has not only the chance of being very ignorant, but likewise giddy and careless.

*Multos esse medicos fama ac nomine re et opere paucos.*

*(Hippocrates.)*

Sir *Gilbert Blane*. In many cases patients get well, in spite of the means employed, and sometimes when the practitioner fancies he has made a great cure, we may fairly assume the patient to have had a happy escape.

I know very well, says an old practitioner, that perhaps more than seven tenths of mankind die not from disease, but from the unsuitableness and excess of medicine.

*Empirici et vetulæ sæpenumero in curandis morbis felicius operantur quam medici eruditi. (Bacon.)*

*Sydenham* says: quæ medica appellatur, revera confabulandi garriendique potius est ars, quam medendi.

Several circumstances indeed connected with the science of medicine, have retarded its improvement, and given a plausibility to this charge of uncertainty; and none more than the different theories which have been advanced in explanation of the phenomena of the animal system in health and disease.

As the frame and bent of the human mind render theory unavoidable, and as theory in medicine will be safe and useful in proportion as it is free from error; it is of consequence to ascertain the causes of those errors to which it is exposed.

Errors in theoretical medicine may be referred in the first place, to the hasty conclusions which the earlier physicians drew from the few facts which were known to them; and to the fascinating propensity to form systems upon data too limited in number, and often contradictory.

In the second place, physicians have been unsuccessful in the establishment of true theory, from not having had sufficiently comprehensive views of the different organs and functions of the animal body.

To this circumstance is owing the rise of the humoral, the chemical the mechanical, the theory of irritation as distinct systems.

The glory of forming a new theory, and of constituting a new era in medicine, has seduced the leaders of each succeeding sect to an attempt of setting aside the doctrines of their predecessors, in order that their own particular system might be more firmly established and might shine with unrivalled lustre.

In the fourth place the so called dogmatics in forming their system, have often adopted certain data, which rest only on specious reasoning, *a priori*, and are supported neither by facts nor observation. This circumstance has as much as any other greatly retarded the improvement of medical knowledge.

It has introduced much false reasoning, and obscure language into medicine, whence it is to be feared, and to be regretted that erroneous, and therefore not harmless practical conclusions have been drawn.

I do not officially or willingly point out, what I conceive to have been the grounds of mistake in medicine. I venerate the learning and ingenuity of our predecessors, which contributed to procure for the medical art, a name and a consequence in the estimation of mankind. If, however, they have failed, we ought to take a lesson from this failure, and by shunning the specious fallacy of hasty generalisation, and by having recourse to a diligent, accurate, and minute inquiry after facts, which inquiry the state of medicine demands of us, endeavour to promote its best and truest interests. (*Hamilton.*)

Medicine adhuc aliter comparata est, ut fuerit magis ostentata quam elaborata; etiam magis elaborata quam amplificata cum labores in eum insumpti potius in circulo quam in progressu se excercuerint, Plurima enim in eo video, a scriptoribus iterata, addita pauca.—!—

F. Bacon. de dign. et augment. scient. L. IVc. 2.

As bearing on the treatment which **HOMEOPATHY** has received at their hands, the following may be mentioned:

Very few of the valuable discoveries in medicine, says Dr. *Buchan*, have been made by physicians, they have been either the effect of chance or of necessity, and have been always opposed by the faculty, till every one else was convinced of their importance.

An implicit faith in the opinions of teachers, and attachements to systems and established forms and the dread of reflection, will always operate upon those who follow medicine as a trade. Few improvements are to be expected from a man who dreads that he might ruin his character by even the smallest deviation from the established rule.

The whole of these observations, it will observed, are in no way directed against Anatomy, Physiology, Pathology, Surgery but solely against the so called *materia medica*, (what Prof. *Joerg*, calls a medical romance), and *Therapeutics* the art of applying those conjectural remedies in practice.

It seems evident from all this, that physic being an art beset with every species of fallacy, it is of the utmost importance, that those who engage in it should be fully aware of this, and that they should so discipline their minds, by a knowledge of the laws of evidence and the rules of investigation, as not to be lead astray by hypothesis and fallacious theories, to which the human mind in different circumstances, is so prone. And as we are to be guided more by experience than hypothesis, it is further manifest that the rules for ascertaining and appreciating facts and the study of the laws of evidence, ought to form an indispensable part of medical education. Nor let any one think that this is a matter of easy attainment. For Bacon himself the great author and leader in the employment of inductive reasoning, was so far infected by the prejudices and errors of his predecessors and contemporaries, as in various parts of his works, to give humiliating proofs of childish credulity, in regard to certain superstitious and frivolous practices which then prevailed.

Upon the imperfect conclusious drawn by individuals from their partial inquiries it has been well observed by Sir C. Morgan, that in every thing that concerns vital action, there are so many points to consider so many discounts and allowances to be made, before the result of experiments can be obtained with purity and precision, that almost every writer has given a different sum total to his labours. The chemist is not necessarily a good physio-

logist, nor the physiologist an accurate experimenter, so that it is rare to find a person uniformly well qualified to discuss the questions which arise in these investigations. But as every one relies on his own observations, theories have been formed by an abuse of induction from the partial results of individual inquiry, by almost every author who has written on the subject.

The various causes which have most materially obstructed the progress of practical medicine may be attributed, to the unfortunate circumstance of physicians of eminence in their profession, mistaking effects for causes assuming imaginary for the real laws of the animal economy.

Thus in tracing the course of nature they mistook its dictates and followed the chimeras of their own imagination.

Medicine, says Dr. *Cowan*,\* for many very evident reasons, has been and continues to be the victim of varied and contradictory hypotheses:—the minds of all who have attempted to trace its deviating course, have wearied in the vague conflict of opinions, and have either sheltered themselves under the authority of a name, or satisfied their doubts by the creation of a principle quite as hypothetical and uncertain as any by which they were previously bewildered. This favoured progeny of their fancy like coloured media to the vision, soon tinges all intellectual combinations, and falsifies the very evidence of the senses; facts seem to multiply in its support, and what at first was regarded as probable, soon strengthens with the fond hope of discovery and the assent of eager uninquiring enthusiasts becoming the basis of a system from which dissent involves error, and opposing facts are either overlooked or discredited. With such a mental bias, the very talents and researches of an individual become injurious to a profession he would otherwise have adorned, and how often in looking back over the history of medicine, can we see, as it were our progress arrested by some favourite dogma of a powerful but prejudiced mind, until a rival intellect lays bare the fallacy, erects another in its stead, changing little more than the name of what it thought to have annihilated. The “Solidists,” the “Fluidists,” the “Brownists,” the “Cullenists,” and the “Broussaiists,” with many others, have undoubtedly obstructed the path of rigorous and impartial observation, by limiting the wide field of phi-

\* *Pathological researches on phthisis* by P. Ch. A. Louis, translated from the French by Charles Cowan.

losophic inquiry to the too often forced adaptation of facts calculated to support their own peculiar and almost necessarily imperfect conceptions, and although their labours have not been fruitless, and much positive knowledge may be gleaned from the mass of their investigations, who does not feel that its volume has been infinitely lessened, and its value impaired by the pre-existence of a principle it was intended to establish, rather than eliminate? The ease with which a theory may be proposed and supported, is exactly proportionate to the vagueness of our knowledge, to the absence of impartial incontestable facts; and until the latter have enjoyed that natural precedence which has been granted them in every science that deserves the name, our deductions can never be established upon any satisfactory and lasting foundation. Could genius grasp the bearings of those laws which influence the health and modify the case of organized beings, *still* observation would be necessary to test the truth or falsehood of its inspirations, but from the finite nature and contracted limits of the human faculties, the necessity of observation if not more absolute is at least more glaring, and the conviction of our mental feebleness should make us shrink from all hasty precocious generalisation.

Let the candid inquirer contemplate the mass of crude amorphous materials which ages have accumulated; let him glance over those creeds of medical infallibility which have successfully risen and waned in the opinion of mankind; then let him direct his view to the living representatives of systems, either stamped with antiquity, or attractive by their modern freshness and apparent novelty and what are the conclusions he must form? Let him change his locality, and he changes his opinion, while every where *facts* are their reputed foundations. The pure *antiphlogistics* of the French, the *controstimulants* of the Italian, the *hepatic nostrums* of England, all lay claims to his attention, and are all recommended as the fruits of long experience and multiplied observation. The discovery of truth from such conflicting testimonies, if possible is at least a Herculean task, and he either becomes the bigotted partisan of a sect, or what is far more rarely the case, resolved to have recourse to rigorous impartial inquiry. The results of his labours may indeed be unsatisfactory, and must necessarily embrace but a limited portion of the vast field of medical investigation, he will, however, ensure the satisfaction of collecting materials available to others, and

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have sacrificed the desire of ephemeral reputation, to the far higher motive of being useful. It is indeed a subject of deep congratulation, that minds such as these are daily multiplying, and in looking back on what a few years have effected, there is every encouragement for future anticipation, and every reason to suppose, that the results to which we shall ultimately arrive, though never probably of any Utopian character, will at least commend themselves to the reception of every sound and unprejudiced mind.

What names we would ask, continue to survive the oblivious tendency of time? The detailers and chroniclers of *facts* not *opinions*; the latter have sunk into the abyss of forgetfulness, and truth alone swims over the extant of ages.

Prof. *Rush's* opinion on the causes which have retarded the progress of medicine:

1. An undue attachment to great names, *Hippocrates, Galen, Araeteus* among the ancients, *Boerhaave, Cullen, Brown, Broussais* among the moderns have all in their turns established a despotism in medicine, by the popularity of their names, which has imposed a restraint upon free inquiry, and thereby checked the progress of medicine, particularly in the ages and countries in which they have lived.

2. An undue attachment to unsuccessful but fashionable modes of practice. Where a medicine does not generally cure a disease in its recent state, it is either an improper remedy, or it is given at an improper time, or in an improper quantity.

3. Indolence and credulity in admitting things to be true, without sufficient examination. The acrid humours of *Boerhaave* would not have prevailed so long in our systems of pathology, had the blood been sooner subjected to a natural and chemical analysis; (?) nor would a belief in the specific nature of the plague, or the competency of quarantines to prevent the importation of the yellow fever, have been so universal in the beginning of the nineteenth century, had the facts, which are numerous and plain upon those subjects, received a faithful and candid investigation.\*

\* When the *cholera* raged so fiercely on the continent of Europe in the years 1829—30—31 some physicians proposed the firing of canon-balls to destroy the contagious effect of that disease. Our excellent satirist Dr. *Mises* remarked on that occasion, that he should never have expected that such large pills would become fashionable in medicine.

4. Neglect to record *minute symptoms* in the history of diseases. Hippocrates and Sydenham are justly exempted from this charge against our profession. Had their method of examining and describing diseases been generally followed, we should not this day complain of so much imperfection in our science. A disease is a lawless evil.

To understand its nature from its symptoms, it should be inspected every hour of the day and night. It is during the latter period fevers most frequently have their exacerbations and remissions and it is only by accomodating our remedies to them,—!— that the practice of medicine can become regular and successful.

5. The neglect to discriminate between the remote and exciting causes of diseases. Under the influence of this negligence, the death of many persons from the miasmata which produce the yellow fever, has often been ascribed to the full meal, the intoxicating draught, the long walk, the night air, which excited them into action.

6. The neglect to employ the passions as remedies in the cure of diseases an accidental paroxysm of joy, fear, or anger, has often induced a sudden and favourable crisis in cases of doubtful issue.

7. The great and unnecessary number of medicines which are used for the cure of diseases. Did we prescribe more for their state and less for their name, a fourth part of the medicines now in use would be sufficient for all the purposes intended by them.

By thus limiting their number, we should acquire a more perfect knowledge of their virtues and doses and thereby exhibit them with more success.

8. An exclusive dependency upon some one medicine, or one class of remedies. Bleeding, purges, and vomits, sweating medicines, hot and cold water, ice and snow, baths of different kinds, opium and bark, crude quicksilver and calomel. iron and copper, acid and alkalies, lime and tarwater, fixed air and oxygen have all been used separately by physicians, in diseases which required in their occasional changes, the successive application of many different medicines of opposite virtues or a variety of the same class of medicines. This exclusive attachment to one set of remedies, has not been confined to individual physicians.

Whole nations are as much distinguished by it as they are by language and manners. In England cordial and sweating medicines (purgatives not excepted), in France bleeding, injections, and diluting drinks of Gum water, rice and barley water, in Italy cups and leeches, in Russia hot and cold baths, and in China frictions constitute the predominating and fashionable remedies in all their respective diseases.

9. The dependent state of physicians upon public opinion for their subsistence. It is this which has checked innovation in the practice of medicine and too often made physicians the apothecaries of their patients.\* To a dependency of our profession upon commerce, we are in part to ascribe the belief of the importation of pestilential diseases in nearly all the large cities in Europe and America.

10. The interference of governements in prohibiting the use of certain remedies and inforsing the use of others by law. The effects of this mistaken policy has been as hurtful to medicine, as a similar practice with respect to opinions has been to the christian religion.†

11. Conferring exclusive privileges upon bodies of physicians, and forbidding men of equal talents and knowledge, under severe penalties from practising medicine within certain districts of cities and countries. Such institutions, however, sanctioned by ancient charters and names are the bastiles of our science.

12. The refusal in universities to tolerate any opinions in the private or public exercise of candidates for degrees in medicine which are not taught nor believed by their professors, thus restraining a spirit of inquiry in that period of life, which is most distinguished for ardour and invention in our science. It was from a view of the prevalence of this conduct that Dr. ADAM SMITH, has called universities the dull repositories of exploded opinions.

\* It is this, and this chiefly which checks the progress of Homœopathy.

† Before the Homœopathic doctrine attracted the attention of the princes of Europe its followers were prohibited to prepare their own remedies. The enemies of the system lurked behind, and when once they got a hint, that some one strove against this barbarous interference of governement, he was summoned to the courthouse, made answerable for his deeds like a miscreant and compelled to pay heavy penalties for that which was nothing but an act of conscience.

The last cause I shall mention which has retarded the progress of medicine, is the division of diseases into genera and species by means of what has lately received the name of nosology.

Upon this part of our subject, I shall be more particular than was necessary for the former remarks; for no one of the causes, which have been assigned of the imperfection of our science, has operated with more effect than the nosological arrangement of diseases.

1st. Nosology presupposes the characters of diseases to be as fixed as the characters of animals and plants, but this is far from being the case. Animals and plants are exactly the same in all their properties, that they were nearly six thousand years ago, but who can say the same thing of any one disease? They are all changed by time, and still more by climate, and a great variety of accidental circumstances. But the same morbid state of the system often assumes in the course of a few days, all the symptoms of a dozen different genera of diseases. Thus a malignant fever frequently invades every part of the body, and is at once, or in succession, an epitome of the whole class of pirexiae in Dr. Cullen's synopsis.

2d. The nosological arrangement of diseases has been attempted from their causes and seats. The remote causes of diseases all unite in producing but one effect, that is morbid excitement and of course are incapable of division. The proximate cause of diseases is an unit for whether it appears in the form of convulsion, spasm, a prostration of action, heat, or itching, it is alike the effect of simple diseased excitement. The impracticability of dividing diseases into genera and species from their seats, will appear when we consider the feeble state of sensibility in some of the internal organs, and the want of connexion between impression and sensation in others; by which means there is often a total absence of the sign of pain or a deceitful and capricious translation of it to another part of the body in many diseases. In the most acute stage of inflammation in the stomach there is frequently no pain, vomiting, nor sickness. The liver in the East-Indies undergoes a general suppuration, and sometimes a partial destruction without pain or any of the common signs of local inflammation. Dr. Chisholm in his essay upon the malignant West-India fever, mentions its fatal issue in two sailors whom he

dissected, in one of whom he discovered great marks of inflammation in the lungs, and in the other a mortification in the right kidney; but in neither of them, he adds, was perceived the least sign of disease in those viscera, during their sickness. Baglivi found a stone in the kidney of a man who had complained of a pain only in the kidney of the opposite side during life. I have lost two patients with abscesses in the lungs, who complained only of a pain in the head. Neither of them had a cough, and one of them had never felt any pain in his breast or sides. Many hundred facts of a similar nature are to be met with in the records of medicine. Even in those cases where impression does not produce sensations in remote parts of the body, it is often so diffused by means of what has been happily called by Dr. Johnson an intercommunion of sensation, that the precise seat of a disease is seldom known. The affection of the bowels and brain furnish many proofs of the truth of this observation.

Errors in theory seldom fail of producing errors in practice. Nosology has retarded the progress of medicine in the following ways.

1st. It has led physicians to prescribe exclusively for the names of diseases without a due regard to the condition of the system, this practise has done the most extensive mischief, where a malignant or inflammatory constitution of the atmosphere (??) has produced a single or predominating epidemic, which calls for the same class of remedies, under all the modifications which are produced by a difference in its seat and exciting causes.

2d. It multiplies unnecessarily the articles of the *materia medica*, by employing nearly as many medicines, as there are forms of disease. I know it has been said, that by rejecting nosology, we establish indolence in medicine, but the reverse of this assertion is true; for if our prescriptions are to be regulated chiefly by the force of morbid excitement, and if this force be varied in acute diseases by a hundred different circumstances even by a cloud according to Dr. Lining, lessening for a few minutes, the light and heat of the sun, it follows, that the utmost watchfulness and skill will be necessary to accomodate our remedies to the changing state of the system.

It remains now, that I mention the means of promoting its certainty and greater usefulness. It will readily occur that this is

to be done by avoiding all the causes, which have produced its present state of imperfection.

1st. Let us strip our profession of every thing that looks like mystery and imposture, and clothe medical knowledge in a more simple garb. Truth is simple upon all subjects, but upon those which are essential to the general happiness of mankind it is obvious to the meanest capacities.

There is no man so simple, that cannot be taught to cultivate grain and no woman so devoid of understanding, as to be incapable of learning the art of making that grain into bread and shall the means of preserving our health by the culture and preparation of aliment be so intelligible, and yet the means of restoring it when lost be so abstruse as to require so many complicated means for its application ? To suppose this is to call in question, the goodness of the Supreme Being, and to believe that he acts without unity and system in all his works.

In no one of the acts of man, do we behold more weakness and error, than in our present modes of education. We teach our sons words, at the expense of things. We teach them what was done two thousand years ago, and conceal from them, what is doing every day. We instruct them in the heathen mythology but neglect to teach them the principles of the religion of their country. We teach them to predict eclipses and the return of comets, from which no physical advantages worth naming, have ever been derived ; but we give them no instruction in the signs which precede general and individual diseases. How long shall the human mind bend beneath the usages of ancient and barbarous times ? When shall we cease to be mere scholars and become wise philosophers, well informed citizens and useful men ?

From a review of what has been lately effected by our science I cannot help admitting with Dr. Hartley, that in that happy period predicted in the old and new Testament, when religion shall combine its influence upon the passions and conduct of men, will fresh discoveries in medicine. Christian Missionaries shall procure the same credit, and kind reception among pagan and savage nations, *by curing diseases by natural means (!)* which the apostles obtained by curing them by supernatural power. Yes, the time I believe will come, when from the perfection of our

science, men shall be so well acquainted with the method of destroying poisons that they shall tread upon scorpions and serpents without being injured by them, and mothers from their knowledge and use of the same antidotes, shall cease to restrain a sucking child from playing on the hole of the asp, and the weaned child from putting his hand on the cockatrice's. Suspended animation, if it should occur in that enlightened state of the world shall no more expose the subjects of it to premature interment. Pestilential diseases shall then cease to spread terror and death, over half the globe; for *interest* and *prejudice* shall no longer oppose the removal of the obvious and offensive causes which produce them.

Lazarettos shall likewise cease to be the expensive and inhuman monuments of error and folly in medicine and in government. Hospitals shall be unknown, (the liquor and drogue shops will be destroyed), the groans of pain, the ravings of madness, and the sighs of melancholy shall be heard no more. The cradle and the tomb, shall no longer be related, for old age shall then be universal.

Long, long before this revolution in the health and happiness of mankind shall arrive, you and I must sleep with our fathers in the silent grave. But a consolation is still left to us, under the pressure of this reflection. If we cannot share in the happiness we have destined for our posterity, we can contribute to produce it. For this purpose let us attempt a voyage of circumnavigation in medicine, by resurveying all its branches in their connexion with each other. Let no part, nor function of body and no law of the animal economy, escape a second investigation.

Let all the remote causes of diseases and above all, let the resources of our profession in the *materia medica* (which is nothing but a combination for error, got up by chance and conjecture what Prof. Jørg pleases to call a medical romance) be subjected to fresh examinations. It is probable many new remedies remain yet to be discovered; but most of the old ones, demand new experiments and observations to determine their doses and efficacy. It is impossible to say, how much the certainty of medicine might be promoted, and its usefulness increased by a more extensive knowledge of its application.

But in vain shall we enlarge our knowledge of the remedies, nay more, to no purpose would an antedeluvian age be employed in collecting facts upon all the different branches of medicine

unless they can be connected and applied by principles of some kind. Observation without principles is nothing but empiricism, and however much the contradictions and uncertainties of theories may be complained of; I believe much greater uncertainty and contradictions will be found in the controversies among physicians concerning what are said to be facts, and too upon subjects in which the *senses alone* are employed to judge between truth and error.\*

I know from experience, the consequences of contending with ancient prejudices and popular names in medicine, with abilities greatly inferior to the contest. But I have not laboured in vain. If I have not removed any part of the rubbish which surrounded the fabric of our science, nor suggested any thing better in its place. I feel a consolation in believing that I have taught many of your predecessors to do both by exciting in them a spirit of inquiry and a disposition to controvert old and doubtful opinions, by the test of experiments. I have only to request you to imitate their exampls. Think, read and observe, observe, read and think for yourselves.

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## CHAP. II.

### OF THE ERRORS, EXCLUSIVENESS AND ULTRASIM OF MEDICAL MEN.

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†The age in which we live, says the ingenious Dr. Ticknor, is most emphatically and truly, an age of improvement. When we look at the world, as

\* *Abjectione humanæ naturæ conditio ad scientiam intuitivam nullatenus assurgens intra angustos limites cognitionis, quam a quinque sensibus haurire potest limites coarctatur. Unde nilominus vir prudens, quantum fert sors humana, quis potest evadere, philosophus vero, saltem pro auḡstiori huius nomininis majestate, nemo mortalium evadet unquam. Medici autem philosophia omnis in expiscandis morborum historiis iisque remediis adhibendis, quæ experientia indice et magistra eodem valent depellere, tota stat, observata tamen medendi methodo, quam recta ratio non speculationem commentis, sed trito et naturali cogitandi modo innixa ei dictaverit.*

† Der Geist unserer Zeit ist die Frucht grosser Vergangenheit und der Saame grossartiger Zukunft. Die Gegenwart ist der Uebergangspunkt mächtiger Gähnungen in Wissenschaft und Leben. Wo wir hinblicken, begegnet uns schroffer Gegensatz und gewaltiger Zwiespalt in Meinung und Ansicht; zugleich aber gewahren wir die Zeichen versöhnender Steigung, welche aus dem Kampfe der Parteiungen hervorgehen muss; denn alle Entzweiungen haben ursprünglich die Einheit in sich verhüllt, und die Zeit entwickelt sie erst an das Licht als die Frucht des

it is at the present day, and contrast it, with its previous history, we shall have the most perfect demonstration, that the onward progress in the arts and sciences, as well as the more immediately useful inventions in mechanism, has been vastly greater, since the commencement of the nineteenth century, than during a much longer space of time, at any other previous period in the history of man.

The perfection that has been given to the steam engine, and its various applications, which in its turn, is in a fair way to be eclipsed by the discoveries in electro-galvanism, has wrought most miraculous changes on our planet; it has in a measure superseded manual labor and has so approximated distant regions, and opposite climates, that time and space are nearly annihilated. Stepping back a little into the last century we shall find that political revolutions, such as the world never before witnessed, caused by the growth and diffusion of liberal sentiments and information, have changed the aspects of states and nations, and disseminated light and knowledge, where they had not before existed.

In fact all the changes and improvements of the present day are owing to the diffusion of knowledge; they are but the legitimate effects of a powerful cause—*a lever which moves the world.*

Christianity has extended her influence to almost every heathen nation; and by the Gospel and the arts and improvements of civilised life, the thick clouds and mists of ignorance and superstition are dissipated, and man is made to attain the eminence which his maker designed. Several branches of the healing art amid the general march of improvement have by no means remained stationary, but have made rapid, and astonishing strides to perfection.

But, however, pleasing the contemplation of the progressive improvement in the condition of the human family may be, yet, the view is not one of unobstructed sunshine and beauty. Every new thing, or novel project, is not an improvement, and every innovation is not a useful invention. With the valuable ore in a recently discovered mine, there is often blended something that is worthless or that spoils the metal. If this age is characterized by improvement, the march of intellect, useful inventions, and boundless benevolence, it is no less strongly marked by the wildest extravagance and fanaticism. Whatever scheme is undertaken, whether for the profit or pleasure of ourselves, or for the good of others, is carried far beyond the bounds, which true philosophy would assign to it.

Religion, politics, the desire of amassing wealth in various ways, the rage for speculation, &c., all rage with the violence of a tempest. They are pushed by their advocates to extremity, and not unfrequently, to a remarkable degree of absurdity. An abstract principle right and good, and pure in itself,

ergänzenden Lebens. Darum bietet uns die jüngste Vergangenheit den Anblick einer in schroffe Gegensätze auseinander gehenden Zeit in Wissenschaft und Leben, ein Ausgebären und Entwickeln aller gegensätzlichen Ansichten und Meinungen bis zur höchsten Spurze; die Gegenwart bildet dann naturgemäss den Uebergangs- und Wendepunkt aller dieser feindlichen Entzweiungen, und leitet zur Ausgleichung und Versöhnung hin, deren Ziel die nächste Zukunft zu erkennen und zur allmählichen Verwirklichung zu bringen hat. (Prof. Werber)

and productive of the best fruits when wisely acted upon is adopted; and without regard to the individual cases to which it may be applicable or careless of consequences, or the circumstances which modify its operation and influence, it is made the *primum mobile* of all subsequent conduct. Like a quack medicine, that is extolled as a sovereign cure for all the diseases that flesh is heir to, or any valuable remedy in the hands of an empiric, an abstract principle is universally applied, and if mischief results, the blame is attributed to any thing else, rather than to the unskillfulness, or ignorance of him, who administers the remedy. The exclusiveness and ultraism of the present age, is the result of that principle which led Napoleon to such astonishing success in his military career and by which he achieved his multitude of splendid victories. It is the concentration of force—the union of effort—and an undivided attention to a given object—which is certain to ensure success, where that is practicable in any undertaking or enterprise, and which is equally certain to degenerate into the wildest extravagance and the most grievous error, when the aim is misdirected. Much of the improvement and extravagance of the day, is, no doubt due to the study of a single subject—to the devotion of genius to a particular pursuit—with an exclusive, ardent, enthusiastic, and almost delirious attachment to the subject which so engages the mind.

Beneficial results will most assuredly ultimately flow from the errors and vagaries that are manifested, as well as from the discoveries that are made and the truths that are developed; but not till the errors are perceived, and duly appreciated; they will then stand as landmarks to the pilgrim of science or as beacons on the hidden rocks and quicksands, warning the mariner of unseen danger.

A succeeding rather than the present generation will profit by the truth and the error that we shall leave behind us; they will reap the fruits of our labour when time, the only true test, shall have refined the ore, and the dross shall have become separated from the pure metal. The preceding remarks are peculiarly applicable to the medical profession. We have made innovations that startle for a season, but soon sink with their authors into merited contempt and neglect—and even the most valuable of our improvements are in danger, from the too ardent zeal of their friends, of being considered as worthless, and cast into the sea of oblivion. Like the principle of temperance which is right in theory and practice, as far as it is necessary for health and comfort, or expedient for morals, it may be led to include every article, either of food or drink, whose abuse in the hands of the unprincipled or unthinking can by any possibility do harm. Exclusiveness and ultraism seem to be the order of the day in medicine, as well as in most other things; but there is one thing which exclusiveness would do well to remember—and it is this—that *a good thing may be urged so far as to render its rejection certain*. Most well regulated minds refuse to accede to a proposition although it may be based upon truth, whose tendency is to exclusiveness, and spurning the narrow bounds prescribed them by a want of philosophy, they refuse to acknowledge the frenzy of a zealot, or the dogmas of a master.

If we consult the history of medicine, we shall find that the most opposite theories have existed at the same time, and have each been most zealously

defended by their advocates; and these, again, have given place to others, with almost the frequency and regularity that one crop of vegetation is succeeded by another, which have been as warmly praised, and as soon exploded and forgotten as their predecessors.

Among those who have been contending for victory and notoriety in our profession, there have occasionally been seen some honest labourers after truth—those whose primary object it was to clear away the rubbish of former theories, and amid their wreck, to seek whatever material there might be fit for a more durable edifice, and lay its foundations upon a wider, firmer, and more permanent basis. The theories that have been framed to account for the proximate cause of typhus fever, and the consequent treatment of the disease may be adduced to illustrate the fate of all, or nearly all fabrics of a kindred character. \*The humoral doctrine of Boerhaave was succeeded by the nervous doctrine of Cullen, whose splendid reign was in its turn terminated by the appearance of the cerebral doctrine of Clutterbuck, which was again destroyed by the omnipresence of the gastro-enteric doctrine of Broussais: whose glory is already suffering a partial eclipse by the dothinenteric doctrine of Brettonneau, Bouillaud and others of the French masters.†

\* A mesure que l'humorisme fit des progres, les purgatifs acquirent une vogue de plus en plus grande: on les employa dans presque toutes les maladies et, comme on crut voir en eux un remede universel, contre tous les maux, on leur donna le nom pompeux de medecine, consacre encore de nos jours par le vulgaire, aux potions purgatives. Avec de pareilles idees on devait non seulement prescrire des purgatifs aux malades, comme moyens curatifs mais encore aux personnes saines, pour les preserver des maladies qui pourraient les affliger. De l'habitude assez generale, dans les siecles precedens, de se purger plusiers fois par an, ou du moins aux temps des equinoxes et des solstices. Les historiens rapportent que Louis XIII., roi de France, fut purge cent fois dans le courant d'une annee. Apres la terminaison de toute maladie, les medecins humoristes ne manquerent jamais d'administtrer un purgatif pour evacuer tout ce qui, suivant eux, pouvait etre reste de la matiere corrompue ou viciee et les plus celebres medecins du dernier siecle, qui cherchaient a baser la medecine uniquement sur l'observation et l'experience, ne sont pas tout a fait a l'abri de ce reproche: car, pour ne parler que de Sydenham, qui ne sait quil administrait toujours de purgatifs a la fin de toute maladie febrile, meme apres les fevres intermittents? (Dr. Martens).

† Boerhaave taught that fever was the result of a depraved state of the blood—Cullen, that it was an affection of the nervous system.—Clutterbuck, that it was located in the brain—Broussais, that it consisted in a inflammation of the mucous membrane of the stomach and upper portion of the alimentary canal—while Brettonneau and Bouillaud now teach that it consists in the inflammation and ulceration of certain glands in a portion of the alimentary canal. As a further offset to the evidence adduced from post examination, it must be observed, that so far as the mere redness or injected state of the mucous membrane is concerned we can draw no certain inference as to the previous existence of influencing this structure. That these phenomena are frequently the result of changes affected in articulo mortis, or post mortem is fully demonstrated by the observations of Mr. Yellowly and Mr. Seeds.

Broussais and his followers are indeed fully sensible of the observation of Celsus. *Necque quicquam esse stultius quam quale quid in vivo homine est, tale existimare*

The contrariety of practice consequent upon such discrepant theories.—The *antiseptics* and *antacids* of one school, the *antispasmodics* and *diaphoretics* recommended by another, the *cordials* and *stimulants* by a third—whilst the whole of these remedies are condemned by a fourth class of physicians, whose chief remedy and sole hope consists in leeches to the head, or some region, of the abdomen, &c., is but a fair specimen of the uncertainty and fluctuation that has ever attended the practice of the healing art. Such an aspect of affairs may well excite the attention of a philosophic mind and raise the trite but important query, who shall decide when doctors disagree! —

There are, and probably always will be those, who believe in the doctrine of essential, idiopathic fevers, specific diseases and contagion; and while they would in some instances do mischief, by the malpractice in stimulating and purging too much a Broussaisian would be guilty of no less evil, by following on the practice of his own theory—by leeching and bleeding too much. Bleeding appears to be the order of the day. The inveterate theoretical Bleeder will bleed in the most opposite states of the system, he will bleed to check the circulation, if depressed he will bleed to restore it, and to increase the heat of the body when it is below a healthy standard—he draws blood to subdue reaction, and to excite it, he calls bleeding a sedative, and again he says it is a stimulant—with such a man bleeding is a *sine qua non*, it is almost food and drink, and is about equivalent to vomiting and purging—it is refrigerant in summer, and calefacient in winter—a hobby which he rides either rough or smooth shod.

When the question was put to an ancient orator, as to what was most necessary to constitute a good speaker, he replied *action*; when he was asked what was next most important again he replied *action*; and when the question was reiterated the third time, the third time he replied *action*. Were a modern *Sangrado* asked what was most necessary in the treatment of disease, doubtless he would reply, *bleeding*; should the question be repeated, undoubtedly he would repeat the same answer, and should it be reiterated the third, or to the thirtieth time, the same answer would be as often returned, unless perchance it should be varied to *leeches*, Calomel, purgatives.

Our modern Pathologists, *Marshall Hall, Louis*, the author of the numerical system (!) think bleeding the *sac totum* in all maladies, it is the non plus ultra, when drawn in quantities of 40—50 ounces. Bloodletting, says our ingenious author *Marshall Hall*, is not only the most powerful and important, but the most generally used, of all our remedies. Scarcely a case of acute, or indeed of chronic disease, occurs, in which it does not become necessary to consider the propriety of having recourse to the *lancet* (!!). To what extent bloodletting is carried in our modern age, may be learned from the following examples, which I have extracted from the most standard work of *Marshall Hall* on the blood.

esse in moriente imo jam mortuo, for where they fail in detecting a red and injected state of the mucous membrane of the bowels, they account for its absence by ascribing it to a post mortem change, thus availing themselves of this fact, when it affords an argument in their favor, whilst they manifest an unwillingness to allow any importance to it, when it is adduced against their doctrine.

*John Filser, aged 40, a short healthy countryman, applied for advice on the 27th of March, he complained of pain in the left side, which was increased on his attempting to inspire, said he has been subject to inflammation of the lungs, and had always been obliged to bleed for it.*

The symptoms were not very urgent, I therefore took *only* fifteen ounces of blood, (just to begin with), which offorded him very trifling relief; I gave him a purgative (!?) and desired to hear from him on the following morning.

On the 28th he was enabled to walk with the greatest difficulty about half a mile to see me; he said the pain was exceedingly increased, and he could not make the slightest attempt at inspiration; I again bled him, sitting in the upright posture in a chair, from a very large orifice: fourty-four ounces (!) flowed before either relief or syncope was produced. The blood was drawn in seven different cups, each of which the patient held himself (a very submissive patient) during the operation; by the time he had lost forty-eight ounces, he was in a state of syncope from which, however, he soon recovered; the pain had entirely left him, and he was enabled to inspire as freely as usual. The blood was lost in about three or four minutes, the last twenty ounces having a thick buffy coat.\*

I was sent for to see Henry Bawden, aged 50, on August 18th at eleven A. M. On my arrival I found him in a bed lying on his back with his shoulders and head raised, breathing with great difficulty, and affected with an uneasy sensation of dryness in the throat, with a voice extremely hoarse, and reduced to a scarcely audible whisper, his pulse was full and strong, and 86 in a minute; there was considerable thirst; added to the affection of the larynx; Immediately opened a vein in the right arm and took *thirty-five* ounces of blood, the patient being in a recumbent position receiving it in

\* Boerhaave thought that the proximate cause of inflammation was a morbid viscosity of the blood, obstructing the course of circulation in the small vessels. The main fact brought in proof of this, was the buffy coat formed on the surface of blood, drawn from a patient labouring under an inflammatory affection. This is disproved by considerations so obvious, that it is truly unaccountable that they should not have occurred to this eminent physician and his followers. For in the first place, it does not appear in blood taken at the beginning of inflammation, as it certainly would, if the alleged viscosity were the cause of the disorder—secondly: The same crust appears on blood, taken from a person labouring under inflammation from a mechanical injury, such as a fractured bone: a sure proof that it must be an effect, and not a cause—Thirdly this crust is merely the separated coagulable lymph of the blood, at all times present in it, and an essential constituent of it; and when it separates itself on the surface, it is from its fluidity being increased, and from continuing longer in a fluid state while in the act of cooling, so far is this appearance from arguing viscosity. This erroneous doctrine of Boerhaave, has still a great influence upon the mind of many practitioners who think still that the buffy coat formed on the surface of the blood, after having been drawn from the patient, is an indication to bleed and bleed, again and again.—!—

Quelle est la plus terrible des terreurs ?

C'est l'homme dans son erreur.

The most terrible of terrors

Is man in his errors.

six distinct tea-cups. This did not produce the least faintness; the buffy coad of the blood was considerable; saline medicine with the tartaras antimonii, was given every four hours.

On the 18 at seven P. M. I again saw him and considered it necessary that the bleeding should be repeated; this was accordingly done to the extent of *twenty-five* ounces without producing faintness. The same medicines were directed for him with an *opiate* at bed-time, (opium and bleeding an excellent composition).

On the 19 at eight A. M. I again bled him! and when I had taken about fifteen ounces of blood he became pale and sick (no wonder) a profuse perspiration broke out over the whole body, and for the first time complete syncope was produced.

On the 20th twenty leeches were applied to his throat, and then a blister after which no further depletion was necessary. Elisabeth Smith, aged 18, having been much out of health during two months, was admitted into Bartholomew's Hospital, on Oct, the 29. complaining of violent pain across the abdomen augmented on pressure; the breathing hurried, the pulse 110 and hard, the bowels confined, she was placed in bed and bled from the arm, and although in the recumbent posture she fainted when XII ounces of blood had been taken.

On the 30th the pain continued unabated; she was again bled in the recumbent position, and syncope occurred when Dr. XIV. had flowed. Forty drops of tincture of opium (!!?) was given inmediately after bleeding.

On the 31th ounces XV of blood were taken, in the same manner and with the same effect, and twenty leeches were applied.

On Nov. the 1st thirty leeches were applied. On the 3d the pain and tenderness of the bowels were increased, the pulse hard and 115: Dr. XI. of blood were taken, and syncope was again produced and Dr. VII. were drawn from the loins by cupping, still the pain was unabated on the 7th and she had become extremely feeble, (I should think so), the pulse was 130 the retina had become acutely sensitive to light: the extremities cold, and the legs swollen; and the urine was limpid and sometimes passed involontarily.

She now took the Extractum conii (!!?) at bed time and with great relief—! this (stupifying) relief continued for six or seven days. The pain then returned, and eventually the patient left the hospital little benefitted. (I should think exhausted, and miserable).

The fatal consequences of blood letting, especially when carried to such an extent as syncope, and the loss of blood in general, Copeland has well delineated in his medical dictionary, which for the sake of information may here find a place.

#### 1. MORBID EFFECTS OF LOSS OF BLOOD.

This is a subject of greater practical importance, than has generally been attached to it, and one which I have had numerous occasions to contemplate particularly from the year 1816 to 1828—on epoch during which bloodletting was either more generally adopted, or carried further, than the nature of several diseases, and the constitution of many patients warranted.

The effects of copious depletions have been well illustrated by the experiments of Dr. Seeds. Dr. M. Hall (?) and others showing that several morbid states may be occasioned by copious losses of blood, or by too large a proportion of this fluid accumulating in the head, relatively to the rest of the body, as a consequence of much bloodletting; and M. Pierry has illustrated the same subject by numerous experiments.

## 2. MORBID EFFECTS OF LOSS OF BLOOD IN PERSONS NOT PREVIOUSLY AFFECTED WITH SERIOUS DISEASE.

The effects will naturally vary with the suddenness or rapidity of the loss, the extent to which it has preceeded, and the habit of the person, especially as regards vascular plethora, at the time when it occurred.

It is evident that an evacuation which has been rapid will have a more marked and serious effect, than the same quantity removed at several times or in a slower manner; and that when blood is discharged at intervals, a much larger quantity may be lost without producing the morbid effects often resulting, from the sudden loss of a smaller quantity; or, if they occur, they may be of a different kind from those which follow rapid discharges. The subjects therefore which chiefly require consideration are 1st the immediate effects of large loss of blood; 2d the more remote consequences; and 3d the slow and insidious effects supervening on repeated losses, of small or moderate extent.

### A. *Of the immediate effects of copious bleeding.*

These are vertigo lapothemia or a sense of sinking, syncope, feeble and slow, or sometimes quick fluttering pulse; slow or apparently suspended respiration for short periods, interrupted by deep sighs, eructations from and sometimes sickness of the stomach, a pale and cold perspiration countenance sighing and yawning, generally followed by a return of the pulse and consciousness; and if the hemorrhage is not renewed upon the restoration of the circulation, recovery soon follows. Where, however, the loss of blood is greater, the above symptoms are more marked; the syncope continues longer; the respiration which is carried on during this state, entirely by the diaphragm, is nearly imperceptible, until it suddenly returns at intervals with deep sighs; sickness and vomiting occur, and restore consciousness for a time, but the patient again relapses into syncope which is broken in a similar manner; and if the loss of blood has ceased, a more permanent restoration follows the sighing and sickness, and recovery slowly takes place.

When, however, the loss is still greater, either absolutely or relatively to the energies of the patient, or if it continue after the above effects supervene, the return of consciousness is often attended with some degree of delirium, a difficult stertorous breathing; dyspnoea; gasping for breath; occasionally retchings and discharge of the contents of the large bowels; an irregular intermittent, or imperceptible pulse; loss of animal heat; great restlessness, violent shuddering and great tremor and agitation, sometimes so violent as to shake the bed upon which the patient lies; a sense of sinking through

the floor; convulsions, or tetanic spasms, and contractions; terrible gasping for breath, and death.

Such is the common grouping of the morbid effects; but some of them are more marked than others. Thus when the loss of blood is very large, the patient may suddenly and unexpectedly expire in one of syncope which occur, or he may sink more gradually, without any appearance of delirium or convulsion, sometimes with the faculties entire to the last. The former may occur after excessive bloodletting or hemorrhage, when the patient has been incautiously raised up, or when he has not been instantly placed in the recumbent posture when syncope occurred; the latter has taken place unexpectedly when bloodletting has been carried too far or too often repeated, in the recumbent posture.

*Convulsions* are often the most marked effects, either of excessive hemorrhage, or of large and repeated venaescetion. This symptom is very common among delicate females particularly those of an epileptic or hysterical diatheses, and in children and young subjects.

Delirium is another prominent effect of excessive evacuation of the vascular system; but it usually presents something peculiar. The carotids are often rather full, the countenance is pale, and the head cool—symptoms indicating, with the character of the delirium, impaired vital energy of the brain. In some cases the delirium is associated with convulsions, and both may ultimately be followed by coma or lethargy. Delirium more rarely occurs in children or young subjects from excessive loss of blood, than in adult or advanced age; but coma is not infrequent in the former particularly when the loss of blood has occasioned convulsions, which in them usually terminate in coma.

(To be continued.)

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## ON THE HOMŒOPATHIC DOSES OF MEDICINE.

BY

**Dr. G. Lingen.**

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(Concluded.)

The important fact that all organic functions depend on atomic action, is also beautifully exemplified in the vascular system.

Though the blood is the menstruum of nutrition, yet it only acts as such by means of the smallest vessels, viz: the capillaries. For in the arteries it remains arterial, and so little does it contribute to nutrition, that the membranes of the arteries themselves must be supplied with the nutritive element by those smaller vessels. In the veins the blood remains venous, and they like-

wise are provided for by these smaller vessels. The latter then are the only channels, in which the arterial blood becomes changed partly into the substance or *parenchyma* of the organs and their secretions to which they (the capillaries) belong, or into venous blood. Whether nutrition is accomplished by the actual deposit of the globules of the blood, or only by the exhalation of the capillaries, we must admit, that in either case the blood has to undergo atomic division into particles, the different constituents of which are attracted according to the different affinities, so that for instance the nerves form out of them nervous, and the muscles muscular substance, &c.

Now as the blood contains all the immediate constituents\* of all the organs of the body, being at once bone, nerve and muscle, &c., in fluid state, it is the *simile universale* of all the organs of the human system, acting, as already shown, in atomic portions and by specific affinity, that is to say under the law of Homœopathy.

We now proceed to the Homœopathy of the nervous system, the main regulator of all animal functions. Here we find the materialist at a total loss, how to account for effects from causes altogether immaterial. Joy or grief excite instantaneously the lacrymal glands, and a flow of tears bursts forth, to neutralize the overpowering feeling, which consumes more of the lacrymal fluid in a few minutes, than otherwise would have been used in so many weeks. Passionate emotions often poison the milk of the nursing mother, so that a draught from what was, only a few seconds before, the fountain of youthful delight and strength, may now prove fatal, causing convulsions and death. The annals both of history and medicine abound with facts, which illustrate as well the pernicious as also the occasional beneficial effects of sudden mental emotions, so that we need not enlarge on this subject on the present occasion, taking it for granted that nobody will doubt the powerful effects of immaterial causes on the body. If then matter (the human system) can be affected by immaterial causes, why should it not react with matter, though this be applied in atomic fractions, but always in accordance with the general law of affinity? The minuteness of the dose can not be admitted as an objection, since spiritual doses, if we may say so,

\* The few which have not as yet been discovered in the blood, escape the test probably only on account of the smallness of the quantity in which they are present.

altogether destitute of measure and weight, are active agencies and since chemistry promises even prompter reaction, the more minutely the substances employed are divided. The adversaries of Homœopathy have never advanced any reason why these small doses could not act, discharging the subject at once with a peremptory : "it cannot be !" The only possible objection which might be raised with some appearance of plausibility, is that the little dose might become neutralized by the coarser substances which constantly pervade every part of the body. This, however, is prevented in the first place by the dietetic injunctions of Homœopathy and secondly by the specific character of the remedy, which ensures its effects, as might be illustrated by the analogy between some phenomena of galvanism and the action of the nerves. The power of galvanism, says Berzelius, conquers the affinities of the bodies and severs the strongest chemical ties, and Shulz gives us a beautiful example of this, by showing the transmigration of chloride of soda through a solution of nitrate of silver, or that of the acid through an infusion of litmus, without producing, in both instances, the general changes, which under any other circumstance would take place, viz : precipitation and change of color,

If then by galvanic attraction the most powerful laws can become suspended or neutralized, why should nervous affinity not exert an equal sway over the Homœopathic atomic dose, so as to isolate it from other substances, since the great analogy between galvanism and nervous action is generally admitted ? It is also known, that by means of electricity diseases can be transferred from one individual to another, even such diseases, of which no pathogenetic product is known, as for instance intermittent fever. This phenomenon can only be accounted for, by supposing that the electric fluid has become a conductor of the pathogenetic principle by having imbued the same in passing through the system, that is to say by mere contact and with the rapidity of lightning.

Are we then not justified to ask, why during the elaborate and careful process, by which the Homœopathic medicines are prepared, the media of dilution, which remain much longer in contact with the medicinal substances, should not in like manner become imbued with their properties ? Experience, the only deciding authority to be appealed to in practical science, does confirm the efficacy of medicines so prepared and administered and even the old school practice, both regular and domestic, makes use of

similar means when applying water boiled with mercury, sulphur or camphor; for despite of the insolubility of these substances in water, the latter becomes impregnated with their properties.

The principal error, however, in judging of the effect of Homœopathic doses, consists in the false premisses, which our adversaries start from. They generally reason thus (if they reason at all): power is in the same ratio with the matter which it is coherent to, hence the extreme attenuation of the latter reduces the former to zero. However power may increase in the ratio of matter in heterogeneous or mechanical action, it does so only to a very limited extent, wherever there is specific action. We find that all chemical products are depending on definite proportions, that is to say, the respective quantities of the substances, to be mixed for the purpose of mutual saturation, are invariable; hence the reacting power not in the same ratio as the reacting means. We have already shown, that many of the specific phenomena of the animal organism require only atomic portions of matter and the greater or smaller quantity of the latter has no visible effect. This is the case for instance in the process of generation, where an atom of the sperma completes fructification as perfectly as any larger quantity. All specific diseases, such as the Itch, Syphilis, Plague, Small pox, Hydrophobia, &c., can be communicated to the organism by means of an atom of the respective contagious substances and the greater or smaller quantity of the infecting medium is quite immaterial, provided that it be not introduced into the system on different parts at one and the same time. The breath of an individual having the plague, a portion of the syphilitic matter covering only the point of a needle, a drop of the saliva of a rabbid dog may poison the most vigorous individual. Many contagious substances are carried about and spread by flies, an atom of the matter of the pestilential bubo may infect a bale of cotton of more than a hundred pounds weight, and communicate the disease to all who touch it. Water mixed by agitation with the air of chambers where there are patients with scarlet fever or small pox, shows by the different reaction with the salts of gold, silver and lead, or with tanine, that the contagia of these diseases have been precipitated into it. (Which by the way serves as a hint to nurses.)

The same remarks are applicable to the contagium of typhus, of the yellow fever, some inflammatory diseases (angina, puerperal fever), many exanthematous diseases (measels, varioloid,

small pox), some scorbutic affections, &c., so that the the schools have acknowledged two different kinds of contagia, viz: volatile and fixed. From this then it follows as an undisputed fact, that a great number of the most viroent and dangerons diseases, hitherto almost entirely intractable by medical art, may, and actually do originate and propagate by influence of atomic portions of contagious substances. Now if the system whilst in health and vigour can by impaired by fractions of noxious matter almost imponderable, why should it be impossible to restore it by equally minute and specific means, since the system, when enfeebled by disease, is certainly still more susceptible to foreign influence ? Or must we believe, that it was the creator's intention, to subject us to ills, without providing means of alleviation at least equally as powerful as those of affliction ? No, every pain has its Homœopathic antitode and in establishing this truth practically, Homœopathy is restoring the harmony of the world.

These few aphoristic observations we consider sufficient, to refute the a priori condemnation, pronounced on Homœopathy by its adversaries, in defiance of all analogy and in violation of true scientific and experimental spirit. We could easily enlarge the series of Homœopathic analogies, nay we would even pledge ourselves to prove, that there exists no science whatever, physical or moral, on which the bearing of Homœopathy could not be established. But preferring practical demonstration to theorizing, we content ourselves with having shown the chief relation of the Homœopathic law, and conclude with our Master's motto :

*"Try the experiment, but try it faithfully and honestly!"*

## CASES OF HOMEOPATHIC CURES.

BY

**Dr. P. Bernstein.**

"Without personal observation, medical science must decline—without recorded experiences it must at best be stationary—and it is only by a union of the two, that it can be rendered cumulative and traditive, and consequently progressive."

*Richd. Bright M. D.*

*Case first.* The patient, a gentleman of 40 years of age, had for a twelve-month been confined to his bed by lameness and stiffness. Without being aware of any other cause, than having taken cold, he was seized in the night with painful stiffness in all his limbs, which under Alleopathic treatment increased to such a degree, that he lost the use of them, with the exception of the right arm, which he could lift slightly, and became entirely dependent on others, for any motion whatever. His face was of a livid hue, his cheeks collapsed, he had no appetite, the whole body was emaciated, his nights rest disturbed by pain, which increased with every change of weather, his bowels constipated. I gave him a dose of *Nux vom.*\* after which he soon fell asleep and spent, for the first time, a quiet night and fell into a perspiration, which had been so much desired. The next morning his bowels were moved with more ease and he had greater command of his right arm. I watched the effect of this dose for several days, during which he was able, aided by his attendants, to leave his bed and walk a few steps, his sleep and appetite improved, and his bowels became regular. A second and third dose of the same remedy producing no further improvement, I administered mercury, which enabled him after the lapse of a few days, to raise himself in bed without aid, and to use his arms more freely. In order to convince myself, whether this amelioration might not still be owing to the *Nux vom.*, previously given, I administered it again, but without effect, which induced me to continue the merc., repeating it every 5th day, until the patient was entirely restored.

*Case second.* A woman, affected in a similar way, and confined to her bed for six months, without receiving any benefit from Alleopathic means. Her appearance was cachectic, collapsed, her whole body emaciated—her joints swollen, particularly the elbows and knee, stinging pains in the swellings, and rending pains in the limbs. The swelling would frequently change from the left knee and right elbow, to the right knee and left elbow, and so

\* The author considers it immaterial to mention, which of the 30 different gradations of each remedy he made use of, having been successful with every one of them.

she continued to lie motionless and in tears, with all her limbs drawn together.—Appetite and stool bad, sleep disturbed. The state of her mind, together with her physical suffering, induced me to decide upon Pulsatilla, which produced, after having been taken but a few hours, an aggravation of her pains scarcely to be borne. At night it was thought necessary to send for me, but the servant did not succeed in finding my house. On my visit in the morning, however, I found my patient much relieved by a copious perspiration produced by pulsatilla and continuing for 4 days, after which she was able to leave her bed and all the symptoms began to diminish gradually and finally subsided altogether after a second dose of Pulsatilla and one of Sulphur.

*Case third.* A man, 40 years of age, frequently suffering from cutaneous diseases and hemorrhoidal affections, was taken with fever and stitches in his chest which were removed under Alleopathic treatment by the liberal use of peruvian bark. Soon afterwards, however, he experienced the following symptoms: difficulty of breathing, particularly when lying on his back, a short hacking cough with transient stitches in his breast, heaviness in his head, the eyes dull, loss of appetite, wakefulness, weakness, oedematous swelling of the feet, particularly about the ankles, suppressed urine, of reddish color, constipation and flatulency. He was now treated, during several months, for hydrothorax, but without success, after which Homœopathy was resorted to. Several doses of *Nux vom.* relieved his breathing and the stitches in his breast in some measure—he also rested better, but the remaining symptoms, particularly the obstinate constipation, began only to improve after *lycopodium* had been administered. The dose was repeated every fourth day, and in about 3 weeks the affection of the chest—the swelling of the feet had disappeared—he had recovered his strength and the other functions became restored to their normal state.

He looked better than he ever had before, and the *lycopodium* being continued, only at longer intervals, he also got rid of his hemorrhoidal affections. I am inclined to consider this case as a combination of the effects of bark and those of the hemorrhoids, for both of which *Nux vom.* and *lycopod.* are antidotes. The difficulty of breathing, particularly when lying on the back, together with the oedematous swelling of the feet and suppression of urine, in this instance, were not to be considered as pathognomonic symptoms of Hydrothorax, but solely the effects of bark, which, being unknown to the physicians of the old school, must necessarily lead to a false diagnosis. A similar case likewise treated as Hydrothorax proved to me, how even very able practitioners were deceived by pathognomonic symptoms.

*Case fourth.* A young man, of lymphatic constitution, having been treated twice for itch, with external applications, and as many times for Gonorrhœa, was taken with pain in the perineum, close to the anus. Shame induced him to conceal his condition, until a painful tumor had formed, which prevented him from walking and which finally, (external means being of no avail) had to be lanced. The tumor was discharging, but there was, for a long time, no appearance of its healing up; debilitating diarrhoea, emaciation, cough and fever ensued, which would not yield to *Cinchona* and it was resolved to

call in Homœopathic aid. Though in this case, a complete fistula in ano, *Causticum* was indicated, I found it necessary, to commence the treatment with sulphur, as an antidote both to *Cinchona* and *Mercury*, previously taken. It had a very happy effect, for the patient slept better, the diarrhoea and irritation in the rectum, the fever and cough began to subside and by repeating Sulphur every 6 days, he was able to leave his room after three weeks. Three doses of *Silicea*, after producing slight stitches in the fistula, caused it to close in another three weeks.

A similar case, but of much more aggravated nature, was cured with sulphur only, and *Silicea* was in many instances found beneficial to bring abscesses to maturity and hasten their opening.—The same might be said of *Lycopodium*, which removed an exceedingly painful tumor, from under the chin of a boy, 3 years of age, in a very short time.

I.

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### M i s c e l l a n e o u s.

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#### PROFESSOR JOHN P. HARRISON OF CINCINNATI COLLEGE AND HOMŒOPATHY.

Difficile est satyram non scribere.  
*Juvenal.*

Long before the discovery of the complete skeleton of the Mammuth, individual bones, belonging to this giant of an antediluvian world, were occasionally dug out, at the banks of the Ohio. They, of course, attracted the attention of our natural philosophers, and various were the opinions and speculations to which they gave rise; some were correct, others erroneous, but all corresponded with the scientific views or acquirements of the respective investigator. Amongst other explanations, we also find on record, that some learned Frenchman pronounced these bones, in good honest faith, *to be the jaw-bones of the fallen angels!*

Now for the moral of the story. It appears, the gentleman, whose name is at the head of this article, dug out of the rubbish of some periodicals and scurrilous publications, sundry detached fragments of Homœopathy, and though he did not even learn the correct spelling of its name,\* he does not hesitate to consign it to the category of relics, left behind by some fallen angel, or to the "revelations and visions, as divine as the second sight in otland." Bearing in mind, that the professor offers this opinion to his

friends and to the public at large in an "*Essay on Medical Experience*,"† we naturally expect, that he carry the conviction of experience with him, when

\* He spells it wrony throughout the whole piece, though he has copied the greek derivation of the term!

† See John P. Harrison's M. D. Essays and Lectures on Medical Subjects.

condemning Homœopathy; but, *mirabile dictu!* not a single item, founded on facts or sound reasoning, do we find in all he says in relation to his subject.

All he could possibly have experienced, must be reduced to his own conviction, that the truth of Homœopathy, which has already shaken the spurious laurels from the head of many a Pseudo-Asculapian, must finally drive the master of *materia medica* from his chair and compel him to begin his study anew. What he offers by way, or instead, of argument, we mention with great reluctance; because it is so totally unworthy of a public teacher, a scholar and a republican, so regardless of all courtesy, observed in literature, that the stamp of barbarianism cannot be mistaken; but nevertheless, we cannot pass it over, without some remarks in defence of Homœopathy and of the land of its origin. To Professor Harrison of Cincinnati College, Germany is nothing but "the land of the indefinite and abstract," and "germanic ideality and metaphysical vapouring" are epithets, which he dwells on with so much emphasis, that it is evident: the german origin of Homœopathy was alone sufficient, to condemn it before his forum. How narrow minded and illiberal to pause at, or ask for, the national color of truth! However, we would ask, how is it, that from "this land of the indefinite and abstract" so many of the most practical and useful inventions have sprung, or must we remind the professor of *materia medica*, that even the first vegetable alkaloids were discovered by a German? Granted that Paracelsus was censurable for his eccentricities, what has Professor Harrison to boast of, at all to be compared to the important additions\* for which *materia medica* is indebted to this "sublime son of fancy and folly," as he deems proper to style him?

The ways of genius diverge from the easy paths of rusty routine, and men's minds, like their bodies, are not all made out of material of the same quality; some being capable of a degree of expansion, which would prove destructive to others. So if Homœopathy appears to the capacity of some individual "a reverie," does it follow, that it actually deserves that name? Certainly not, for the very existence of this continent was considered "a reverie" and a very wicked and chimerical one too! Perhaps then, the Professor, at some farther period, when better acquainted with Homœopathy, may, in like manner, change his opinion of it, as happened with the famous speculation on the Ohio bones. His error, moreover, is much more excusable than that of the Frenchman, who had the advantage of ocular inspection, whilst the former relied only on representation, or rather misrepresentation, and being thus led astray by false traditional authority, gives another example of the fallacy of *medical experience* on which he addresses his pupils so eloquently!

\* Paracelsus introduced most of the mineral substances into *materia medica*.

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